

Consultation, Review, and Permit Requirements (Chapter 4)

Comment: *In addition, the organization and content of the EIS appears inconsistent with NEPA regulations which direct federal agencies to use NEPA procedures to ensure that 1) environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken (40 CFR 1500.1(b)) and 2) the EIS is supported by evidence that agencies have made the necessary environmental analyses (40 CFR 1500.2(b)). [LTR 008]*

Response: The organization and content of the draft EIS is consistent with the recommended EIS format and required EIS contents identified in 40 CFR 1502.10, and the draft EIS thus is consistent with NEPA regulations concerning EIS organization and content. Bonneville decision-makers will not make a decision concerning the proposed action until after the final EIS for this proposal is completed and made available in accordance with NEPA regulations. If Bonneville decides to implement the proposed action or one of the action alternatives, Bonneville will not take this action until after the decision on the proposal is made. Because no decision has yet been made and the proposed action has not yet been taken, the environmental information in the draft EIS has been provided to public officials and citizens consistent with 40 CFR 1500.1(b). In addition, because Bonneville has taken a hard look at the proposed action and its potential environmental consequences (see the responses to comments concerning identification of site-specific elements of the proposed action, adequacy of the environmental impact analysis, and level of specificity for mitigation measures), the draft EIS is consistent with 40 CFR 1500.2(b).

Comment: *The EIS should list and describe all power production and environmental laws applicable to this project. [LTR 008]*

Response: NEPA does not require the listing of applicable laws in an EIS. However, NEPA does require that an EIS provide information on all Federal permits, licenses, and entitlements that must be obtained to implement the proposal; this information is contained in Chapter 4, Consultation, Review, and Permit Requirements of the EIS. Information on applicable laws is provided in this chapter in the context of these permitting and licensing requirements. Additional information on these laws is provided in the relevant sections of Chapter 3 where appropriate.

Comment: *Are you getting access permits for the State Highway? [PS]*

Response: Bonneville would apply for new access permits needed on the state highway.

Comment: *It has taken 2 years for the County to get access permits from the state. [PS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *Shoreline, are you going to ignore like it says in the EIS? [PS]*

Comment: *Think you ought to get a shoreline permit? [RS]*

Response: As discussed in Chapter 4 of the draft EIS, Bonneville will provide each applicable local jurisdiction with information about the proposed action relevant to the jurisdiction's shoreline development permitting process. To the maximum extent practicable, Bonneville will provide the same information that a person or entity wishing to develop in the shoreline area would normally provide to the local jurisdiction pursuant to state and local laws. However, Bonneville, as a Federal entity, will not formally apply for a shoreline development permit because Congress has not waived Federal sovereign immunity from this type of local development permit.

After Bonneville submits project information, the local jurisdictions will then have the opportunity to provide comments to Bonneville on the design of the proposed transmission line within shoreline areas. Bonneville will consider any comments received from the local jurisdictions in its final design of the proposed line. As discussed in the draft EIS, Bonneville intends to plan the proposed line to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with state and local land use plans and programs such as shoreline management master programs.

Comment: *For any oversized or overweight hauls on WSDOT-maintained rights-of-way, the applicant must obtain the appropriate permit from WSDOT prior to transporting any of these hauls. [LTR 010]*

Response: Bonneville's construction specifications state that the contractor must coordinate with the appropriate representatives when crossing state, county, and city streets as well as railroads.

Comment: *The proposed transmission line would cross three WSDOT-maintained highways: Interstate 82, State Highway 14, and State Highway 221. [LTR 010]*

Comment: *A Utility crossing permit is required for all highway crossings. Please contact the South Central Region Utilities Office to obtain the utility crossing permits. [LTR 010]*

Response: Bonneville would obtain crossing permits from the Washington State Department of Transportation for new transmission line crossings.

Comment: *Substation site access road needed, permit for county road. [PS]*

4 Responses to Comments

Comment: *Hanford (federal) is applying for permits of Benton County. [PS]*

Response: Bonneville would apply for new access permits needed on county roads.

Appendix F, Living and Working Safely Around High Voltage Power Lines

Comment: *Do you have any recent information regarding working safely around transmission lines? [PS]*

Response: The document, “Living and Working Safely Around High Voltage Power Lines, 1998” can either be ordered from Bonneville or accessed directly through its website at <http://www.transmission.bpa.gov/orgs/t/tr/documents/l-working.pdf>. The document, “Guidelines for the Installation and Operation of Irrigation Systems Near High Voltage Transmission Lines”, was updated February 15, 2002. This document can be obtained by calling our document request line at 1-800-662-4520.

Other Comments and Responses

Comment: *Prior to the completion of the final EIS, it is essential that a meeting be scheduled between Bonneville and BLM to discuss the project...[including] BLM’s realty requirements for authorizing the project. The BLM’s records show a 44 LD 513 authorization for the McNary-Big Eddy transmission line on a number of the tracts to be crossed by the current project. It is not evident from our files whether Bonneville has one or two existing power lines within this right-of-way. Depending on the existing situation, the Bonneville will either need to amend its existing authorization or obtain a new right-of-way. In either case, a plan of development would be required for the new transmission line. [LTR 007]*

Response: As discussed with Bonneville over the telephone, a meeting is being planned to determine the BLM land crossed and the type of authorizations that may be required.

Comment: *We are interested in a wind farm on our property in Yakima. [PS]*

Comment: *How much velocity does the wind need to make the generators work? [RS]*

Comment: *How can I get information [regarding wind projects]? [RS]*

Response: It would be appropriate for you to contact a potential wind developer or attend public meetings on other wind generation facilities.

Comment: *We [EPA] have rated the EIS, EC-2 (Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information). We have environmental concerns with the project due to the large information gaps found throughout the document. [LTR 008]*

Response: Comment noted. See the responses to comments concerning identification of site-specific elements of the proposed action, adequacy of the environmental impact analysis, and level of specificity for mitigation measures.

Comment: *We have reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project. This document adequately addresses our [Corps] concerns at this level of completion. There may be some specific issues to be addressed during future real estate transactions. [LTR 012]*

Response: Thank you for taking the time to comment. Bonneville will continue to work with the Corps as the project progresses.

Comment: *Please note that the BLM is not completely finished in its review of the DEIS. We will provide additional comments to Bonneville by May 3, 2002. [LTR 007]*

Response: We look forward to your comments.

Comment: *We have two (2) lines existing on our property. [PS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *Concerned about the wind near Horse Heaven. [PS]*

Comment: *Where is the Horse Heaven Wind Project interconnecting? [PS]*

Response: Please see our website for Horse Heaven (<http://www.bpa.gov>, look for *Environmental Analysis, Active Projects*), or contact Kimberley St. Hilaire at 503/230-5361 for more information on this wind project.

Comment: *Benton County Planning to put in new road near Mercer Ranch site. (from Crowe Butte up to road that connects to Alderdale Road) [PS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *Has anything changed with the project since the DEIS was issued? [PS]*

4 Responses to Comments

Response: The general project is the same. Please see this final EIS for any updates.

Comment: *We've sustained power rate increases for irrigation. [RS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *Used early study ~ The EIS referred to 1995-93. [RS]*

Response: Detailed documentation of the resources and impacts along the proposed transmission line was made during studies conducted during 2001 and 2002. This documentation included literature review, aerial photograph review and interpretation, and field surveys. Data and resource information were presented in GIS and in a detailed resource data base. While there was some reliance on information for other studies, a majority of the detailed resource information was derived from the aquatic resource, wetlands, wildlife, cultural, land use, and vegetation field surveys conducted during 2001. Impacts were quantified using GIS analysis.

Comment: *Landowners need one contact person in Bonneville. [RS]*

Response: Comment noted. Bonneville apologizes if there seem to be many players involved. Whoever you contact within Bonneville will ensure that the appropriate person for your particular question gets back to you.

Comment: *John Farmer, edges of irrigated fields have been GPS'd. [RS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *Cut out the repetition in the draft EIS. [RS]*

Response: Bonneville apologizes for any repetition. Often information has to be repeated in order to give context to the analysis being discussed.

Comment: *You get kind of sore from being screwed by the government. [RS]*

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: *How many Wind Generation Towers are on the Stateline Project? And, How many miles are involved? [RS]*

Response: Bonneville is no longer involved with the Stateline Wind Project. Please see our website at (<http://www.bpa.gov>, look for *Environmental Analysis, Active Projects, Stateline*).

Other Comments and Responses

Comment: *Are you going to have to replace the towers wiring out of the Aluminum plant? They're rusty! [RS]*

Comment: *Are you going to replace the existing towers outside the aluminum plant? They appear very rusty, towers are further away and appear galvanized. [RS]*

Response: The existing towers near the aluminum plant will not be replaced as part of this project. It is not uncommon for towers located near an industrial site to have galvanizing problems. Bonneville's maintenance crew will keep an eye on them to ensure they remain structurally sound.

Comment: *In Benton County we don't allow billboards so as not to interrupt the view of the River. [PS]*

Response: The lack of billboards is noticeable and does increase the ability to view the river from the highway.
